

Background Information

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAILS MOROCCO, KING FOR LEADERSHIP IN STRENGTHENING REFORMS

"It is the Moroccan people who will have the last word," HM King Mohammed VI

International praise and support have been swift and clear for the new measures and initiatives announced by His Majesty King Mohammed VI to advance and broaden Morocco's democratic reforms.

► COUNTRIES/HEADS OF STATE

United States

Sec. of State Hillary Clinton expressed "great appreciation" for HM King Mohammed VI's speech. "The announcements that were made last week were in addition to what has already happened, and farther reaching," she said. "We very much applaud the direction that Morocco is moving. We think that's exactly the right approach to take... leaders who are sincere about responding to the needs of their people and trying to get ahead on what's needed politically and economically in today's world are going to be much more successful." She said the US "will support what Morocco is doing" which she added "is a much better model than what we are seeing elsewhere." (3/17)

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/03/158567.htm>

The State Dept. praised King Mohammed VI's speech in an earlier statement. "The US welcomes the announcement by King Mohammed VI outlining his pledge to ongoing democratic development through constitutional, judicial and political reforms. This is a moment of profound change in the region and under the leadership of King Mohammed VI Morocco has made significant achievements in the economic, social & political realms. We fully support the aspirations of the Moroccan people to "consolidate the rule of law, raise human rights standards, promote good governance and work toward long-term constitutional reform. The US values Morocco as a key strategic partner." (3/10)

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/03/158038.htm>

France

France's President Nicolas Sarkozy congratulated HM King Mohammed VI for the profound constitutional reforms and reaffirmed his support for "the ongoing modernization of Moroccan institutions and society." He stressed that France would "always stand by an open, forward-looking Morocco that your Majesty is building since the beginning of your reign." (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/home/sarkozy_congratulate/view

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said: "In Morocco, in a courageous and visionary speech, the king announced the establishment of a constitutional monarchy." (3/17)

<http://www.franceonu.org/spip.php?article5448>

The French Foreign Ministry called King Mohammed VI's address "responsible and courageous," and a "major speech for Morocco and the entire region, particularly given the current context." "We have full confidence in the determination of the Moroccan people and authorities to carry out the announced reforms as well as develop their own democratic model." (3/10)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/home/france_hails_major/view

Spain

King Juan Carlos of Spain spoke with HM King Mohammed VI, commending the comprehensive constitutional reforms that he announced in his speech to the nation. (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/home/spain_s_king_juan_ca/view

Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said Spain "welcomes very positively the far-reaching constitutional reform announced by HM King Mohammed VI."

Spain's Sec. of State for Foreign Affairs, Juan Antonio Ynez-Barnuevo called the reforms "a historic announcement," hailing King Mohammed VI for hearing the aspirations of his people. (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/home/spain_s_pm_applauds/view

Great Britain

British Foreign Minister William Hague "welcomed the King's bold commitment to intensifying and quickening the pace of political and economic reform," and also "commended the strengthening the independence of institutions and to engaging with the concerns of Moroccan society." (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/home/foreign_office_welco4219/view

United Nations

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the comprehensive constitutional reforms in King Mohammed VI's speech, which he praised as "a clear indication that the King has been listening to the voices of his people." (3/10)

<http://www.undpi.org/World-News/Ban-welcomes-constitutional-reforms-announced-by-Moroccan-King.html>

European Union

In Brussels, EU Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton and **EU Commissioner** Stefan Fulle said King Mohammed VI's speech "represents a commitment to further democratization." They said the proposed reforms addressed key elements for modernization, judicial independence, separation of powers, strengthening of the government's role, and equality for women. "Once fully implemented with the input of civil society, it will be a qualitative leap in the process of reforms already initiated by Morocco" and respond to "legitimate aspirations of the Moroccan people." (3/12)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/home/eu_commands_exempla/view

Joseph Daul, President of the European Parliament's European People's Party (EPP), said the reforms announced by King Mohammed VI are "a step in the right direction," "fully consistent with" the advanced status Morocco enjoys in its relations with the European Union. He praised it as a "very important speech," evidence of Morocco's "exemplary" reformist approach. (3/16)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/politics/morocco_s_constituti2890/view

NATO

In Brussels, a **spokesperson for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** said that "As an alliance of democracy, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization welcomes the comprehensive constitutional reforms announced recently by the King of Morocco," adding that Morocco is an "active" partner in the NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue. (3/17)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/politics/nato_commands_large/view

Germany

Germany's Vice-Chancellor & Foreign Minister, Guido Westerwelle, hailed the King's speech: "HM King Mohammed VI has launched constitutional reforms which meet the aspirations of Moroccan society. This is an audacious initiative." (3/17)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/see_also/german_fm_hails_cons/view

Japan

Japan's Deputy Foreign Minister Koro Bessho said that his country "highly welcomes" the speech by King Mohammed VI announcing comprehensive constitutional reforms, adding that this dynamic initiative is part in the continuity of reforms already being undertaken by Morocco. (3/17)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/politics/japan_welcomes_royal/view

Russia

In Moscow, the Russian Foreign Ministry lauded the announcement of "major constitutional and political reforms," by HM King Mohammed VI, a "head of a state sharing strategic partnership with Russia." It said the speech showed Morocco's commitment to reform legislative and executive institutions to expand democratic freedoms and promote the rights of Moroccan citizens. (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/home/russia_lauds_reforms/view

Italy

Italian President Giorgio Napolitano hailed HM King Mohammed VI for announcing reforms that aim to protect liberties and consolidate institutions in Morocco, calling it "a bold step forward" that "confirms the spirit of openness that characterizes the Kingdom." (3/15)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/politics/italian_president_pr/view

Switzerland

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs "commended the constitutional reforms announced by HM King Mohammed VI of Morocco" to address the Moroccan people's aspirations for democracy and freedom. "Switzerland closely follows the developments currently taking place in several countries of the Maghreb and the Middle East" and "has a strong political interest in the establishment of stable and dynamic democracies in this region." (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/world/switzerland_commends/view

Arab League

In Cairo, the Arab League welcomed the constitutional reforms His Majesty the King announced. "The measures announced by HM King Mohammed VI of Morocco...which include carrying out a constitutional reform, are in line with the expectations and aspirations of the Moroccan people," the Secretariat General of the Arab League said in a statement. The organization added that these reforms, which had been recognized by a number of regional and international players, mirror a strong willingness to further consolidate democracy and solidarity. (3/13)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/regional/reforms_announced_by/view

Peru

Peruvian Congressman Luis Gonzales Posada said 'the reforms pledged by HM King Mohammed VI in his speech aim at separating powers and promoting human rights.' He said they will reinforce Morocco's 'leading position in the Arab world' and 'have a positive impact on the region.' (3/12)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/world/morocco_s_constituti/view

Slovenia

Speaker of Slovenia's General Assembly, Pavel Gantar, hailed HM King Mohammed VI's speech, saying "Slovenia stands ready to support the Kingdom in carrying out these reforms aimed, among other things, at consolidating democracy, freedom and equality." (3/14)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/politics/speaker_of_slovenia/view

► U.S. CONGRESS

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chair, House Foreign Relations Committee

"I congratulate the King of Morocco for making such a positive step towards democracy by decentralizing his government, giving more power to the people, so they are accountable and so they are able to have the power. That is a wonderful way to rule by giving more rights to the people by making sure that they have rights and responsibilities and power that enable the leadership to be more accountable to the people. That is what we all want for all countries. Congratulations to the King for a very forward, pro-democracy, pro-accountability approach." (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/see_also/chairwoman_of_us_hou/view

Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT), Chair, Senate Homeland Security/Governmental Affairs

"I am deeply encouraged by the public pledge of King Mohammed VI to advance Morocco's democratic development by initiating a major constitutional reform process that will include a more independent judiciary, direct elections, and additional constitutional changes that will strengthen human rights in Morocco. Throughout North Africa and the Middle East, people are rightfully demanding greater political freedom, economic opportunity, rule of law, accountable government, and reform, and the US must stand on their side. The changes announced by His Majesty in Morocco this week are a hopeful step in the right direction to address the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Moroccan people. Morocco and the US have had a rich and historic partnership that stretches back over two centuries. We in the US stand ready, as friends and partners of Morocco, to help ensure the successful and swift implementation of the proposed reforms. (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/see_also/senator_joe_lieberman/view

US Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services

"I commend His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco for the plan of constitutional and democratic reform that he laid out in his impressive speech. This new reform agenda builds on the King's long-standing commitment to lead Morocco to a future of reform and modernization, and it could ensure the Kingdom of Morocco will continue to stand as a positive example to governments across the Middle East and North Africa. I support the aspirations of the Moroccan people for greater democracy, economic opportunity, and rule of law. In the weeks and months ahead, the US must be vigilant and tireless in our support for the government and people of Morocco in transforming the King's vision of reform into a reality that improves the lives of all Moroccans. The US deeply values our strategic partnership with Morocco, and that partnership will only grow deeper and better as it increasingly comes to rest on shared values as well as common goals." (3/11)

http://mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressOffice.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=a6d68ae4-e569-b0b4-541c-ce68a8d1da67&Region_id=&Issue_id=

Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL)

"I commend His Majesty. There is a reason why His Majesty is one of the most respected leaders, not only in the region, but also in the world. His leadership is forward-thinking—always looking for new ways to make sure that the government is more accountable to the people. He has already made some serious reforms and the entire world is looking at His Majesty as an example to follow, as a person who really understands how to move forward, how to make sure that his government is more accountable. That is why His Majesty is so respected around the world, for his great leadership. The rest of the world is admiring His Majesty." (3/11)

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/us-senate-house-leaders-praise-morocco-kings-pro-democracy-approach-call-on-us-to-be-vigilant--tireless-in-supporting-moroccan-reforms-117960849.html>

Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN)

"His Majesty the King's statement was indeed historic. It shows why Morocco is held at such a high place by people in the US and by our government. I was fortunate to visit Morocco and see the love that the people have for the King and its understandable why the King has that respect. The King himself respects the people as well by this type of action, by saying there are freedoms enshrined in the constitution and there is a democratic government and separation of powers. All these reforms of government that we, the US, hold so dear are guaranteed to the Moroccan people. Morocco is a leader in North Africa and because of his leadership, and the role he has played in interacting with his people—that's why Morocco does not have the same problems as Egypt or Libya. Morocco has been a rock and so we commend the King for his actions and the people of Morocco." (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/see_also/congressman_steve_co/view

Rep. Ann Marie Buerkle (R-NY)

"The American people consider Morocco as a valuable friend and ally. We are so delighted to see these movements and efforts to reform, these freedoms, responding to the desires of the Moroccan people. We are extremely pleased to see this. This is heart-warming, and so good for us to see these movements, and the King realizing the need for reforms and acknowledging it. Now it is interesting to see how he has taken these measures. We are so pleased to see this. The expansion of women's rights is certainly the right thing to do in order to make the country stronger." (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/politics/reforms_announced_by7994/view

► NEWS MEDIA

Washington Post

Two choices in the Middle East: Libya and Morocco, by Jennifer Rubin

"You'd be hard pressed to find a greater contrast last week in the Middle East than Libya and Morocco. While the bloodbath continued in Libya, Morocco was a completely different story... The king, instead of cracking down, decided to speed up a process of decentralization and deconcentration of power... This particular king has been on a reform path for 20 years... Morocco can serve as an example to others in the region that the best defense against both Islamic radicals and secular revolutions is a modernizing country that provides young people with the opportunity for economic success and political freedom." (3/13)

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/right-turn/2011/03/you_d_be_hard_pressed_to.html?referrer=emaillink

Wall Street Journal

Bahrain Could Learn From Morocco's Model, by Ahmed Charai

Amid uncertainty in Tunisia and Egypt, and a brutal dictator's war against his people in Libya, a phenomenon emerged last week in Morocco that might offer a new kind of hope for the region. Some locals have dubbed it the King's Revolution, and neighboring countries and Western policy makers would do well to examine its implications... If the king makes good on his pledge, an authoritarian Arab country will have embraced democratizing trends without a shot fired and without a drop of blood shed. The question is whether the King's Revolution might provide lessons for other monarchs in the neighborhood. In the long run, they may have no choice but to draw lessons from the Moroccan model. (3-16)

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703908304576201000083096940.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

Christian Science Monitor

Can Morocco's King Mohammed VI outpace Morocco's 'winds of change?', Robert Marquand

"In a turning point for Morocco amid winds of Arab regime change, King Mohammed VI now aims by June 30 to formalize a plan allowing the nation's prime minister to be appointed by the party that gets the most votes in democratic elections... In a speech yesterday that even Morocco's opposition Islamists praised, the king – whose family rule dates to the mid-17th century – set out sweeping reforms that include a more independent judiciary, an "accelerated evolution" of direct local elections, and other constitutional changes allowing greater human and gender rights." (3/10)

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/0310/Can-Morocco-s-King-Mohammed-VI-outpace-Morocco-s-winds-of-change>

POLITICO

A model modern Muslim state, by David Avital and David Halperin

The Middle East uprisings—demanding freedom, democracy and prosperity from corrupt, autocratic rulers—give the US a unique historical opportunity to redefine its policies in the region and regain credibility. To do so, it should look to Morocco. While seeking to curb extremists from taking advantage of the unrest, Washington must change its habit of blindly supporting friendly autocrats, who favor stability over freedom. The U.S. must also work with its regional allies on reforms to create a blueprint for the model modern Muslim state. Developing a successful Moroccan model could replace the sweeping unrest with a much-needed wave of economic growth, political freedom, justice and peace. The United States must be prepared to help Morocco achieve all this, and, in doing so, effectively advance U.S. interests and stability across the broader Middle East. (3/18)

http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0311/51550_Page2.html

CNN International

Moroccan king pledges reforms as neighbors battle uprisings

"The Moroccan king has pledged sweeping constitutional reforms as neighboring nations face violent uprisings demanding more democracy. In a rare television appearance on Wednesday, King Mohamed VI said the reforms would include a prime minister elected from the party that wins the most seats in parliament. The prime minister will "be the head of an effective executive branch, who is fully responsible for government, civil service and the implementation of the government's agenda," the king said. (3/10)

http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-10/world/morocco.reforms_1_reforms-king-mohamed-vi-moroccans?_s=PM:WORLD

CNN World/Global Public Square

From Fareed: Japan's resilience and Morocco's meaningful reforms, by Fareed Zakaria

There is a very important op-ed in the Wall Street Journal about Morocco's reforms: "On March 9, the 47-year-old ruler, Mohammed VI, appeared on national television flanked by his brother and son. He tasked a group of esteemed Moroccans – including a former dissident who has bitterly fought the monarchy – to draft a new constitution that would cede roughly half the king's authority to an elected prime minister." Now that's reform. (3/16)

<http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/16/from-fareed-japans-resilient-economy-and-moroccos-meaningful-reforms/>

BBC

Morocco's King Mohammed VI has promised "comprehensive constitutional reform"

In his first national address since last month's nationwide protests, the king said "individual and collective liberties will be expanded." "We have decided to undertake a comprehensive constitutional reform," King Mohammed said in the televised speech to the nation. The monarch added that more powers would be given to Morocco's regions, saying it would help consolidate "our model of democracy and development." (3/9)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12695092>

France 24

Morocco: On the Road to Democracy?

In an 11 minute speech to the nation last week, King Mohamed VI of Morocco stunned the world by announcing a raft of measures that could if implemented drastically change the nature of the regime, until now dominated by the king. (3/14)

<http://www.france24.com/en/20110314-2011-morocco-arab-world-king-mohammed6>

Washington Post/Associated Press

Morocco King Says Constitution to be Revised, by Hassan Alaoui

King Mohammed VI said Wednesday Morocco will revise its constitution for the first time in 15 years, aiming to strengthen democracy in the face of a push across the Arab world. In a rare TV and radio speech to the nation, the popular monarch said a new commission would suggest constitutional revisions to him by June, and the overall project would be put to Moroccan voters in a referendum. The King said the efforts would aim to devolve greater power to Morocco's regions, which would help consolidate "our model of democracy and development." Morocco has so far avoided the persistent unrest that brought down regimes in fellow north African countries Tunisia and Egypt. An ally of both Europe and the United States, Mohammed VI is widely seen as a reformer. (3/10)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/10/AR2011031005184.html>

Agence France Press

Moroccan king's reform pledges draw high praise, by Omar Brouksy

King Mohammed VI drew praise at home and from key allies France and Spain yesterday for his promise of sweeping reforms... Political parties said his address pledging reform was historic and opened the way for a modern Morocco that could be an example to the Arab world. (3/11)

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gTE4gIodjx7iLyri0Oam6YrkpFsQ?docId=CNG.8172e1fa8d5dd34e7cfe320994a91d6b.3e1>

US Senator McCain hails Morocco reform push

Senior US Senator John McCain on Friday hailed pledges by Morocco's King Mohammed VI to pursue sweeping reforms and urged "tireless" support from Washington to help enact his agenda. (3/11)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20110311/pl_afp/moroccopoliticsunrestusmccain

Global Post

The King's Speech ~ Morocco takes a positive step, The View from Fez

On Wednesday, HM King Mohammed VI gave a speech to the nation. In it he announced significant reforms, and if initial reactions are any indication, it will set Morocco up for positive constitutional change. In the rare TV and radio speech to the nation, the popular monarch said a new commission would suggest constitutional revisions to him by June, and the overall project would be put to Moroccan voters in a referendum. (3/10)

<http://www.globalpost.com/webblog/morocco/the-kings-speech-morocco-takes-positive-step>

Huffington Post

The King's Speech, by Kathryn Cameron Porter

King Mohammed VI of Morocco began the challenge of moving his people and country forward since assuming the throne as a young man more than ten years ago. The changes announced by His Majesty this week are a further step in the right direction toward democracy and a better life for all Moroccans... This is a moment of profound change in the region. His contrast to the other so-called leaders is breath-taking and provides a model for the world. (3/15)

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/theblog/index/>

Gulf News

Moroccan king takes a brave step, Opinions/Editorials

Morocco's King Mohammad VI has taken a brave step in his first speech since the successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, in which he promised sweeping constitutional reforms. The most important was to change the prime minister from being a royal appointment to being drawn from "the political party which leads" in parliament, according to the king. The king also promised a free judiciary in his landmark speech, which is also a very important long-term move as it reinforces the normal citizen's confidence and belief in the rule of law. (3/12)

<http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/moroccan-king-takes-a-brave-step-1.774909>

Magharebia

Moroccans salute king's speech, by Siham Ali

Morocco's King Mohammed VI on Wednesday (March 9th) announced sweeping reforms, including a new constitution, an 'independent judiciary', and a popularly elected prime minister. Both politicians and ordinary citizens welcomed the king's promises. (3/10)

http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2011/03/10/feature-03

The Progress Report

Morocco Rocks!, Fred E. Foldvary, Senior Editor

As the winds of protest and demands for change sweep over North Africa and the Middle East, most regimes rigidly resist and snap, but one realm is swaying with the rhythm of reform. Moroccan King Muhammad VI, relatively young at 47 years of age, declared in a speech he would engage in thorough reforms. The king himself would lead the revolution. Morocco will show there can be a homegrown North African realm with greater liberty, equality, and democracy. Rock on, Morocco! (3/14)

<http://www.progress.org/2011/fold708.htm>

► THINK TANKS/NGOs

Brookings Institution

Embracing Reform: A Message from King Mohammed VI of Morocco

As revolution and political change continue to unfold across the Arab world, Morocco's King Mohammed VI is among the few Middle Eastern leaders proactively embracing substantive reform. In a recent address, King Mohammed announced sweeping changes, aimed at addressing the Moroccan people's appeals for constitutional reform and representative government. (3/17)

http://www.brookings.edu/events/2011/0323_morocco.aspx?p=1

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

In Paris, the International Federation for Human Rights took note of the important constitutional reforms announced in King Mohammed VI's speech, aimed to set up "a constitutional monarchy," and hailed the creation of the committee for the revision of the constitution. FIDH recalled that institutional reform in Morocco was a key recommendation of the Justice and Reconciliation Commission (IER) and is "one of the foundations for establishment of a rule of law based on respect for human rights." FIDH noted the King's initiative "to strengthen the foundations for a Moroccan regionalization system throughout the Kingdom, particularly the Moroccan Sahara provinces." (3/17)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/see_also/fidh_lauds_constitut/view

Foreign Policy Research Institute & Hudson New York (Hudson Institute)

Moroccan Democracy and the Future of the Sahara/The King's Revolution, by Ahmed Charai

Over the past three months, Arab heads of state have responded to mass protests in their respective countries by either fleeing or fighting...In all these cases, Arab leaders appear to have ruled out a third option: share power with their people through serious, aggressive reform of the political system. Until this week, that is—when Moroccan King Muhammad VI made a stunning speech to his people in which he committed to doing just that. His supporters in the country have dubbed the new plan for sweeping constitutional reform "The King's Revolution..." (3/11 & 3/14)

<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201103.charai.morocco.html>

<http://www.hudson-ny.org/1957/morocco-king-revolution>

Open Democracy

The Moroccan exception, and a king's speech, by Valentina Bartolucci

The Arab world's turmoil continues, from protest in Bahrain and reshuffles in Tunisia to violence in Libya. The combination of its scale (hundreds of thousands of people involved), ideals (freedom and dignity), means (peaceful protest) and channel of influence (the internet) already justify the term "Arab spring." The changes are visible everywhere, and everywhere there is a long way to go, including in Morocco. But here, in the westernmost country of the Arab world—also with a substantial Berber component—the announcement by its monarch of a package of constitutional reforms on March 9, 2011 emphasizes once more Morocco's singular political character. (3/11)

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/print/58467>

Foreign Policy

The Arab nightmare, by Blake Hounshell

Outside of Tunisia and Egypt, Arab dreams are fast becoming Arab nightmares. In Libya, a spontaneous popular uprising is turning into a civil war -- one that the rebels are rapidly losing. There are some bright spots: Morocco's King Mohammed VI seems to understand at some level that he needs to embrace change lest he be swept up by it. But in general, the region's autocrats are responding as they always have to popular anger: with a combination of brute force, comically half-baked reforms, and economic bribes. (3/15)

http://passport.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/03/15/the_arab_nightmare

Hispano-Moroccan Research Center

"It is a historic speech and an unprecedented progress" towards reinforcing the rule of law and building a "best future" in order to meet the Moroccan people's aspirations, said Miguel Angel Puyol Garcia Puyol Garcia, president, Hispano-Moroccan Research Center. He said His Majesty King Mohammed VI's speech took into account the expectations and aspirations of Moroccans from all walks of life, who proved their "democratic maturity" by protesting in a peaceful manner for political and social changes. The multi-level political reforms, notably advanced regionalization, separation of powers, judiciary reform, and consolidation of the Prime Minister's status, are milestone in Morocco's history, he said, making it an example for others in the region. (3/11)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/general/morocco_s_constituti/view

Frederic Rouvillois

Professor of constitutional law, Paris

Of His Majesty the King's announcement, he said 'This is a very important reform from the angle of the Kingdom's modernization and its openness on modernity and globalization,' adding 'this reform makes things clear and attempts to rationalize them concerning the distribution of powers, and the administrative and political organization of Morocco.' Referring to the Advisory Committee for revising the Constitution, Rouvillois said the road map was already elaborated under the rule of HM the King. 'This is a heavy responsibility,' he underlined, 'stressing that the appointment of a famous jurist at the head of the Committee opens promising prospects.' (3/14)

http://www.map.ma/eng/sections/general/royal_speech_of_marc/view

Eurasia Review

Morocco's Model Uniting Democracy Building and Sustainable Development, by Dr. Yossef Ben-Meir, president, High Atlas Foundation

With socio-revolutionary movements in North Africa and the Middle East and governments in the region seeking to identify and implement viable models for political reform and development, Morocco is fortunate to have been raising public awareness during the past two years about its decentralization plan. Morocco's approach to promoting both democracy and development—which King Mohammed VI often discusses and did right after the nation-wide protests of February 20th—is to wed the two together so that each is advanced by way of the other. (3/14)

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/analysis/moroccos-model-uniting-democracy-building-and-sustainable-development>

14032011/



Taieb Fassi Fihri

Minister of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation

Taieb Fassi Fihri was born on April 9, 1958 in Casablanca. He completed his secondary education in mathematical sciences at Rabat's Lycée Descartes in 1976 and in 1980 received a degree in applied statistical engineering from the National Institute for Applied Economics and Statistics (INSEA) in Rabat. He received a masters in public economy and planning from Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne University in 1981 and a PhD in analysis and political economy from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris in 1984.

In 1986 he became chief of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' division for European Union affairs and in 1989 he became director of the Ministry of State's foreign affairs bureau. In 1993, King Hassan II named Fassi Fihri State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

In 2002, Fassi Fihri spearheaded negotiations which led to a free trade agreement with the United States. Also in 2002, Fassi Fihri was named by King Mohammed VI as Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation where he served until his current appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in October 2007.

Minister Fassi Fihri currently lives in Rabat, Morocco with his wife and two children.



Aziz Mekouar

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the US

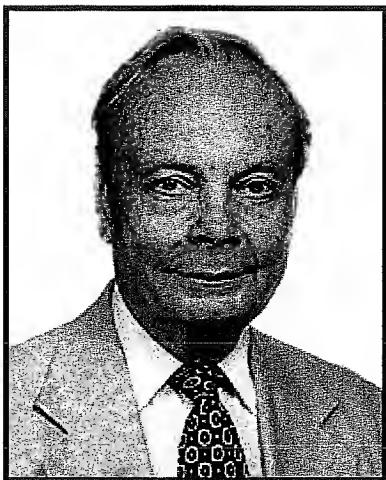
Aziz Mekouar became ambassador of Morocco to the United States on June 19, 2002.

Before his current assignment, Ambassador Mekouar served as ambassador to Italy (1999-2002). He was elected Independent Chairman of the Council of the United Nations Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) in November 2001 and re-elected in 2003. He had previously been appointed ambassador to Portugal (1993-1999) and to Angola (1986-1993). Ambassador Mekouar has also served as minister plenipotentiary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in Morocco (1985-1986), permanent representative of Morocco to the International Bureau for Information Technology (1978-1985), and first counselor and deputy chief of mission at the Embassy of Morocco in Rome (1977-1985). He attended the French High School Charles Lepierre in Lisbon, Portugal, and obtained a graduate degree from the Higher School of Commerce (HEC) in Paris, France, in 1974.

Ambassador Mekouar is fluent in Arabic, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. He is married with one child.

I. William Zartman



***Professor Emeritus, Paul H. Nitze School
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Morocco Is Irreversibly Committed to Democratic Reform and Good Governance

- In a speech on March 9, 2011, King Mohammed VI announced a broad revision of Morocco's constitution in an effort to consolidate democracy in Morocco, devolve power to the regions, broaden individual freedoms, solidify the rule of law, and strengthen human rights.
http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5h0nK8I_SJCTJBKcT7YkOImpIhsPw?docId=CNG.9bfa3f79ce20b70cbc21d53796182754.101
- While historic, reforms that have been underway in Morocco since the 1990s. A significant hallmark was the open election in 1997 which led to the appointment of an opposition government in 1998. Other reforms under King Hassan II included: freeing of all former political prisoners, the opening of political space for civil society, the establishment of a human rights body to address abuses of the past, and the relaxation of restrictions on freedom of the press and freedom of speech.
- King Mohammed VI has further consolidated, accelerated, and broadened these democratic reforms. In one of his first speeches, the King emphasized the need to create a new relationship between the State and its citizens. His Majesty's staunch commitment to democracy and an active civil society is likewise illustrated in a 2003 speech to the nation, "Indeed, our strength lies in the democratic system we have opted for as an irreversible choice which, coupled with an aggressive, committed diplomacy, involving parliament, political parties, trade unions and civil society, will help us in the defense of our just cause."
- Much of what King Mohammed VI has initiated is part of an ongoing process to empower individual citizens and the institutions that represent them. These major achievements include: two free and fair parliamentary and local elections; reform of the family code; inclusion of women in national and local elections; the beginnings of the process of regionalization to bring power and decision making closer to local communities; the equity and reconciliation commission dealing with past human rights abuses; the human development initiatives (INDH) to build sustainable futures for Morocco's most disadvantaged communities; the recent upgrading of the institution responsible for human rights protections; and the recently launched process of judicial reform to make the judiciary more independent and professional.
- These initiatives highlight Morocco's democratic transition. As the Washington Post noted, "[Morocco] has over the past decade undergone a slow but profound transformation from traditional monarchy to constitutional monarchy, acquiring along the way real political parties, a relatively free